

## Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing at EIU

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The Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing in High School/Middle School is available to those already certified as middle school or high school teachers. Teachers should be able to complete this certificate in two summers and one academic year. Teachers earn a Certificate in the Teaching of Writing in High School/Middle School by satisfactorily completing 18 hours of graduate work in the Teaching of Writing:

All students must complete the following **six-credit** course:

- ENG 5585 Writing Project for K-12 Teachers\*\*

Students should choose at least **four** of the following **three-credit** courses:

- ENG 4760 Studies in Professional Writing\*
- ENG 4801 Integrating the English Language Arts
- ENG 4906 Problems in the Teaching of English\*
- ENG 5007 Composition Theory and Pedagogy
- ENG 5011 Studies in Composition and Rhetoric\*
- ENG 5091 Studies in Language, Linguistics, and Literacy\*

By completing these **five** courses, teachers will earn **18 hours** of graduate work that may be applied toward an M.A. in English.

The new program creates opportunities in the EIU English Department for full-time high school and middle school teacher to develop and enhance expertise in the teaching of writing in their classes. The Certificate (appearing on the transcript) professionally recognizes the significant accomplishment of those who pass 18 graduate hours in the teaching of writing.

Again, credits earned for a certificate may be applied toward an M.A. in English.

\*These courses may be repeated.

\*\* Students must complete one year of teaching before applying for English 5585.

## **Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing Rationale**

### **Evidence that an Audience for the Certificate Exists:**

English 5585, our Eastern Illinois Writing Project Summer Institute course, has been a successful addition to our English graduate program. We have had a steady flow of applicants for English 5585, with 32 applying our first year, 2008, 35 for 2009, and 30 for Summer 2010. Applicants tend to come from outside our English graduate program but have primarily come from English/language arts backgrounds at the middle and high school levels. Last year we had five elementary teachers, six junior high/middle school teachers with either special education or language arts as their focus, and four high school English and/or special education teachers participating in our Summer Institute. In 2008, half of our teachers were English/language arts specialists at either the middle or high school level. Other teachers specialized in math, Spanish, business, and special education. Four of our teachers were elementary level generalists.

After completing our Summer Institute, the majority of our teachers expressed an interest in pursuing a certificate of writing, augmenting the work they began in ENG 5585 while building graduate hours toward recertification and the M.A. degree and the increased salary associated with it. Of the 29 participants during our two Summer Institutes, 18 expressed an interest in the Certificate. When these teachers earn their graduate certificate, it will not only augment their professional development but also, as an accomplishment acknowledged on their transcripts, ensure their recertification as classroom teachers and increase their salaries. The state of Illinois requires that teachers recertify every five years by building a professional development portfolio. Completing graduate course work like the proposed Graduate Certificate will more than fulfill the eight-credit requirement, but the renewal process also encourages pursuing a completed advanced degree. According to Illinois salary scales, teachers who earn 16 graduate hours beyond their B.A. gain a substantial increase in salary. That increase is even more substantial if the teacher earns an M.A.

### **Funding for English 5585 and other Eastern Illinois Writing Project Programs:**

Funding for the Eastern Illinois Writing Project is based on a federal grant that is matched by the University. The first year's grant (2008) was \$30,000.00. Last year (2009), the grant was for \$43,000.00, and in 2010, the grant increased to \$46,000.00. The Eastern Illinois Writing Project also drafted two mini-grant requests that would add \$10,000.00 to the grant total. Matching funds for the grant are met from two sources: the director's course release and summer teaching salary (provided by funding from the Provost's office) and benefits and tuition waivers for Summer Institute participants (provided by the Graduate School). As salary and tuition expenses increase, these matching funds also increase. The English department provides undocumented support from two sources, as well: the graduate assistant help the English Graduate Studies Committee and coordinator have so generously provided and the clerical help Ginny DiBianco, English secretary, provides.

## **Why Include Courses Outside Traditional Views of Writing Pedagogy?**

Although this Certificate is focused primarily on the teaching of writing, it builds on National Writing Project principles, which see all literacies as interconnected, so courses which seem to have varying degrees of emphasis on writing pedagogy are included in the certificate. For example, NWP's National Reading Initiative (NRI) supports local writing project sites in expanding their knowledge base about the teaching of reading and in developing high-quality programs, for teachers across the curriculum, that address reading comprehension as a companion to work in writing. Through ongoing programs such as Advancing Literacy, NRI aims to develop leadership for national and local work in reading, with a view toward expanding opportunities for teachers to participate in sustained, high-quality professional development in reading at writing project sites across the network. Goals of NRI include the following:

- To expand and develop the role of NWP as a professional development resource in the teaching of reading, as a companion to its role in the teaching of writing
- To support local sites in expanding their knowledge about reading, the teaching of reading, and the nature of academic literacy across subject areas
- To help sites develop and/or strengthen successful models for professional development in reading comprehension for teachers in grades 4–12, and to expand opportunities for teachers in content areas other than English/language arts.

Writing project leaders and teacher-consultants have long worked with issues of reading comprehension as they explored the reading-writing connection and the roles reading plays in helping students to become effective writers. This Certificate of Writing will provide opportunities to continue this exploration.

## **English 4906 and Other Scheduling Issues:**

English 4906 (Problems in the Teaching of English) has been offered as a course in teaching creative writing. The certificate program should not overtax either English 5011 or 5007. Advising will ensure that the few students who have completed ENG 4801 or 4760 as undergraduates at EIU gain access to appropriate electives, four of which can be repeated. The Department does not anticipate the need to offer additional sections or require new hires or reassignment of current staff, especially since our graduate courses are primarily offered in the late afternoon and evening. The only required course for the certificate is English 5585, a course offered only in the summer. Other courses are electives. Since most of our students are coming to us from programs outside our EIU English department, they will not have taken 4000-level courses listed in the electives. At this time, we do not plan to expand the course list by proposing English education courses. We believe this will be a valuable addition to the English graduate program at EIU. It will potentially bring students from outside EIU to our program and encourage them to complete an M.A. degree in English.

## **APPROVALS**

**Date approved by the department or school: November 16, 2010**

**Date approved by the college curriculum committee: January 12, 2011**

**Date approved by the Honors Council (*if this is an honors course*):**

**Date approved by CAA: CGS:**